



LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
25TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

April 18, 2013

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
H-307 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford D. Bishop
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
2429 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Bishop:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill, I urge you to provide full funding of the FY 2014 President's Budget request for claims processors within the Veterans Benefits Administration.

As the Committee is aware, the backlog of outstanding veterans' compensation claims has grown almost 180 percent over the last four years to nearly 900,000 with an average wait time of 254 days to process the claims. Additionally, approximately 560,000 of these veterans have been waiting for more than 125 days, the Department of Veteran's Affairs benchmark for processing claims. Like other Veterans around the country, my constituents in Rochester, NY are negatively impacted by these delays on daily basis.

I know the Committee shares my commitment to ensuring our nation's Veterans receive the best possible care following their selfless service to our nation. At the present time, we are failing to meet our obligations to these brave men and women and Congress must make it a priority to reverse this disturbing trend in the growing backlog of compensation claims. While the VA has set a goal of processing 98 percent of veterans' benefit claims within 125 days by 2015, Congress must ensure the VA has adequate and sufficient resources to accomplish this goal.

Therefore, I once again respectfully urge you to include \$2.5 billion for the Veterans Benefit Administration in the FY 2014 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill to ensure the availability of claims processors necessary to expeditiously eliminate the backlog in veterans benefit claims.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Louise M. Slaughter".

Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress